

Communion Services

TWICE in every year the Lesson-Sermon in Christian Science churches is on the subject "Sacrament." Twice in every year is there thus given the opportunity to gain a larger, broader understanding of this important subject, which God's people have been contemplating from many an angle for many an age. Centuries ago Moses, in his endeavor to educate his followers into a truer comprehension of their dependence on and relationship to God, instituted what was called the feast of the Passover. This feast was largely material in its observance, but was nevertheless intended for the specific purpose of keeping the Israelites in frequent remembrance of the manner in which God had delivered them from bondage and of the fact that their future prosperity depended on their obedience to His commands.

From Moses' time until Jesus' public ministry this custom had prevailed. Jesus observed the same rite, though in much modified form, when he ate what we call "the last supper" with his disciples. Mrs. Eddy states in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (p. 33), "This supper closed forever Jesus' ritualism or concessions to matter." This "last supper" which Jesus ate with his disciples was much less material in observance than the Jewish Passover, for he was thereby to lift the thought of his followers to the recognition of a more spiritual concept of unity with God and to impress upon them the necessity of their grasping the spiritual import of his own life work, as well as of their own responsibility to walk in his footsteps.

Paul's teaching in regard to the Lord's supper was an endeavor to awaken his hearers to the metaphysical import or spiritual sense of bread and wine. He admonished them to study most earnestly such meaning in order that they might win therefrom the richest possible results and that none should eat and drink unworthily. From then until the present time, Christian churches all over the world have observed with much regularity what they have denominated "the sacrament of the Lord's supper," frequently giving it the name of "communion service." They still hold at such times to the use of material bread and wine, and in clinging to the symbol do they not lessen thereby the value of the service? It remained for Mrs. Eddy under the guidance of divine wisdom to divorce such service from the material and institute in its place the silent, or spiritually mental, communion.

When the time for this semi-annual communion service approaches, it is well to remind ourselves that such occasion is one of no slight importance. Provided for as it is by our Church Manual, and with its own special form of service, thought should be awake to the reverent nature of the opportunity and one should come to its observance with lights trimmed and burning. While it is true that Christian Science teaches the possibility of constant communion with God, divine Mind, such possibility has not yet been fully attained by the most earnest student of Christian Science, and special occasions, such as our communion services, should be considered as offering possibilities of blessing and blessedness that have also not yet been fully realized. What they stand for and what their purpose is must be discerned clearly if one is to win from them the inspiration and strength which they are expected to afford.

Mrs. Eddy has approached this subject with utmost reverence, and in her wonderful exposition of what such communion should be, tells us in *The Christian Science Journal* of August, 1889: "The sacrament shall be observed . . . by a short interval of solemn and silent self-examination by

each member, as to his or her fitness to be called a follower of Christ, Truth; as to his real state of love toward man, and fellowship and communion with Christ; as to whether he is gaining in the understanding and demonstration of Truth and Love, coming out from the world and being separated from error; growing less selfish, more charitable and spiritual, yea, walking worthy his high calling."

In view of all this, does it not seem plain that one should spend much time in prayerful thought in preparation for this event? It must surely be a time to examine one's self and see what is one's attitude toward all that is true and holy. One should turn into his consciousness with renewed carefulness the ever searching light of Truth. Shall it not be a specific time for purging from one's thought all that is unworthy and untrue?

This communion service is a precious occasion, since it thus provides the opportunity of reaching out for a closer walk with God, for a larger, fuller recognition of what is meant by the Christ-life, for an opening of the heart to receive into its innermost recesses the uplifting hope of the Christ, Truth, as revealed in the inspired teaching of Christian Science. Such occasions, if properly improved, will result in greater ability to heal the sick and thus prove to the world beyond the possibility of a doubt that the Church of Christ, Scientist, is, as we read in the Manual (p. 19), "designed to be built on the Rock, Christ; even the understanding and demonstration of divine Truth, Life, and Love, healing and saving the world from sin and death; thus to reflect in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant."

ELLA W. HOAG.

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Among the Churches

Current Notes

BOSTON, MASS.—The First Church of Christ, Scientist. Sunday service (during July and August), 10:45 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:45 a.m.; Wednesday evening meeting, 7:30 p.m., in the church edifice, Norway, Falmouth, and St. Paul Streets. The church is open to visitors Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Reading rooms: Little Building, corner of Tremont and Boylston Streets (fourth floor); open daily, except Sunday and Wednesday, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and on Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. International Trust Company Building (second floor), 45 Milk Street, near Devonshire, opposite post office; open daily, except Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Coolidge Corner Building, 1316 Beacon Street, Brookline; open daily, except Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.—First Church of Christ, Scientist, was dedicated April 20. The building, which is situated at Meridian and Twentieth Streets, was constructed several years ago and has been occupied since that time.

First Church of Christ, Scientist, was organized in August, 1889, when a group of twenty-nine students of Christian Science enrolled as charter members. At first the little band held their services at the homes of the members; later the old church, then standing in Meridian Street opposite Christ Church, was rented. Through the growth and development of the work it became necessary that a new location be secured, and in 1890 the Methodist Church at Alabama and North Streets became the home of the organization.

In 1897 First Church was reorganized. In 1898 a beautiful room in the Propylæum on North Street was secured,

[871]